Dharma Rahasya (The Secret of Dharma)
by Barrister Champat Rai Jain
Translated from the Hindi original (1940)

Preface

The sole purpose of this book is to remove the differences and disputes that have arisen among various religious sects. Reading it will show that dharma (religion) is an exact science, and that nearly every faith contains within it genuine grains of truth; these grains only need to be cleared of doubt and obscurity and presented plainly. The common ground between religions is itself already present — it only needs to be pointed out. The book is written in the form of questions and answers. Both the teacher (Guru) and the disciple are fictional characters. It is hoped that the purpose for which this book was written will soon be fulfilled through the power of truth. On the first edition, I had, for reasons of my own, printed the author's name as Rishabh Charan Jain; this time I am printing my own name.

Bombay, 19 March 1940 — C. R. Jain

Chapter One: The Nature of Dharma

The Guru said: Dharma is a science whose purpose is to lift man out of the suffering and anguish of worldly existence and establish him firmly in the highest happiness. Man does everything for his own benefit; a wise man never acts without purpose. In practicing dharma, man's purpose is to attain infinite, imperishable and inexhaustible happiness — something that cannot be found in worldly existence. In this world people pursue wealth, riches, honour, status, enjoyment and luxury as their goals, but all of these are merely sensory pleasures. They are not true happiness but only its semblance — that is, they are not really happiness, though to those who see only with a gross, superficial eye they appear to be happiness. The reason is that all of them are momentary. The soul can never find true satisfaction in them, and the harm that comes from indulging in them, both in this life and in the life to come, has been compared to a sword-edge coated with honey: it carries sweetness, but it cuts the tongue and throat. Even after enjoying pleasure day and night, the senses are never satisfied — which is why the senses have been likened to a blazing fire, because the more ghee (clarified butter) that is poured on a fire, the fiercer its flame becomes.

The nature of sensory enjoyment is such that whatever the external object may be — whether man has obtained it himself or another person has given it to him out of goodwill — every object can only be enjoyed through the senses, and for this reason all objects can give only sensory pleasure. Through them one cannot obtain a happiness that is inexhaustible, imperishable and infinite. Foolish people are delighted by the glitter and adornment of the world and wish to build mansions here and dwell permanently, but death never fails, at some moment, to remind them that this world is merely a kind of inn where it is wholly impossible to stay forever. Such is the nature of the desire for constant happiness on one hand, and the impossibility of true happiness in the world on the other. A wise man reflects deeply on the true nature of the soul, of desires, and of the world.

I asked: Guruji, is the soul (atma) also a substance? Western materialists prove consciousness to be impermanent — so what need is there for religion at all? Whoever has died is gone; what can

religion do for him?

Guruji answered: The soul is a substance of a kind entirely distinct from matter (pudgala/prakriti). Consciousness is a quality (guna) of that substance; it is also called the jiva-dravya (the substance called the living being). Matter possesses form, taste, smell and touch, none of which belong to the soul-substance by its own nature. The soul is a formless (arupi) substance. Whatever is formless is also imperishable; that is, it is beginningless and endless.

*Thus every living being is an indivisible and imperishable entity. Western scholars too have come to regard the soul as indivisible. In W. McDougall's *Physiological Psychology* (Temple Primer Series), pages 78–79, it is written (quoted in the original in the book) to this effect: "We are compelled to believe — that is, it appears to me and to many others — that the divisions and parts of experience are not separate entities but are aspects of one and the same substance or self. And since this is not a part of the brain, and is not a material substance at all, but is distinguished from all material substances by the fact that it is endowed with the quality of personal identity, and yet acts through many regions of the brain (that is, through the various locations of the brain in which conscious activity is continuously occurring at every moment), we are therefore forced to conclude that this is some non-material substance or self. And this self — which must be posited as the ground of the unity (indivisibility) of individual consciousness — we may call the soul of the person."*

This nature of the soul, which Western scholars have only now, with great difficulty, come to recognise, has been known to the sages and saints of India from time immemorial. The soul is indivisible; for this very reason no human being ever perceives himself as a collection of parts the way one might regard a company or a board, where the question of multiple parties can arise. Therefore the soul, in truth, never dies; death and life pertain only to the body, whereas in terms of substance the soul is eternal and imperishable.

This soul is also omniscient — I asked: What is the proof of the soul's omniscience? There can surely be no proof of it that would be acceptable?

Guruji's answer: There is no doubt that the soul is omniscient. In some of the Jaina and Hindu philosophical schools, the soul is explicitly held to be omniscient by its very nature. The explanation of its omniscience is this: the qualities of a substance are always uniform — for instance, gold, no matter which country it comes from, will always have the same qualities. The only difference will be due to impurity: in one place it may contain more alloy, in another less. But wherever pure gold is found, its qualities will always be of the same kind. Such is the case with the soul as well. Knowledge (jnana) and perception (darshana) are the soul's own intrinsic qualities, and these exist in every soul. Though in some they are manifest and in others hidden; in some less, in others more — yet whatever one soul knows, every other soul is likewise capable of knowing. Therefore every soul has the capacity to know all things that any being has known in the past, that any being knows today, and that any being will come to know in the future. In other words, every soul has the capacity to know all knowable objects across the three worlds and the three times. And it is also clear that there is not, has never been, and will never be, any object that a soul is incapable of knowing — because apart from the knowable there can be no "unknowable" object, since without proof the existence of anything cannot be accepted, and how can there be proof of a thing that no one will ever come to know? Hence the "unknowable" cannot exist as a category, and as far as knowable things are concerned, every soul possesses, in principle, the power to know all

things and all states. Therefore omniscience exists by nature in every soul.

The reality is that the soul is itself of the nature of knowledge, is knowledge incarnate. Knowledge is simply the name for the states or transformations (paryaya) of the jiva-substance. Outside the soul there are only objects, not knowledge; knowledge is the soul's own divine light. Along with infinite knowledge, the soul also possesses the power of infinite perception. This soul is indeed a substance endowed with truly wondrous power. Consider for a moment what it means to perceive external objects! The moment the eye opens, half the world at once stands shining with light and form before it. Does the whole of it somehow squeeze itself into the eye? From outside, only some subtle rays or waves of particles — called "radiation" in English — fall upon the eye and affect the nerves connected to the visual organ. The soul's actual encounter with them happens somewhere far within. Nor is it the case that the soul itself goes out through the eye. And even if it did, how could it then perceive anything? So when the soul remains exactly where it is, and the external world likewise remains exactly where it is, and only a few subtle particles travel from outside to the soul, is it not a marvel that the soul, sitting within, can see everything? The truth is that perception too is a modification of the jiva-substance: the change that occurs within the soul under the influence of external sensory stimuli is itself, in its being experienced, called perception. And now, if you consider that this change does not occur throughout the entire body but only in one part of it — and that too only to the extent connected with the subtle inner nerves of the visual organ — you will readily understand that if the soul's power of illumination were to awaken not just in one region but throughout its entire extent, what unprecedented and infinite vision it would then possess. Hence every soul, by nature, is already filled with the quality of infinite perception. And the truly wondrous thing is that this inner, non-physical perception shows the things of the world exactly as they are, precisely where they are.

I said respectfully: Guruji, I have now understood well that every soul is by nature immortal and omniscient. But now I wish to know whether the soul can also attain imperishable happiness in some way?

Guruji answered: Yes! Every soul has the capacity to attain infinite, imperishable happiness. The soul is, by its very nature, of the essence of bliss. Worldly pleasure and pain arise from the union and separation of objects, or from the imagination of the mind. But that joy — indeed, that supreme bliss — which the soul experiences when it is freed from the turmoil of union with the unwanted and separation from the wanted, arises from within the soul itself, and therefore reveals the soul's true nature. The peace and joy that yogis attain in meditative absorption (samadhi) does not come to them from outside at all — because there is no shop anywhere outside the soul that sells pills of bliss for one to eat and thereby gain happiness. Rather, whatever enters the soul from outside can only be sensory pleasure, which is momentary, ultimately a source of unrest, and the very opposite of true happiness. To understand that inner, spiritual, supreme bliss experienced by yogis, an illustration is needed. Consider: when some task on which you have laboured meets with success, where does the joy you then feel come from? Suppose you have sat your law examination and are awaiting the result; then suddenly a telegram arrives saying you have passed. Now tell me — where did the joy you felt on reading that telegram come from? Was it contained in the paper on which the message was written? Or in its words? No! Because you have seen thousands of such papers before, and those very words are written in dictionaries, yet you never felt joy on reading them there. So it is clear that the joy a person feels on receiving news of having passed an examination comes from within, not from outside. And this happens precisely because the change that occurs in the soul's experience upon receiving the news is itself, of its own nature, blissful.

What this means is that with the arrival of the news, all the difficulties, worries and afflictions you had to endure because of your legal studies were at once destroyed, and because of their destruction the soul, for that moment, came to abide, to some extent, in its own natural form. Since the soul is by nature of the essence of supreme bliss, its abiding in its own nature is itself bliss, which one experiences instantly. This is why great yogis and sages turn their gaze away from the external world, become absorbed in the experience of the Self, and experience imperishable happiness. It is to attain precisely this that the great sages performed the most arduous austerities. This joy, called self-bliss (nijananda), is not dependent on any external source of pleasure; it is entirely self-sufficient. One who experiences it finds within his own nature the very fountain of supreme bliss and remains absorbed in that experience. Because supreme bliss is a quality of the soul, and a quality can never truly be separated from its possessor, once this supreme bliss is fully attained it can never again diminish. This true happiness, unlike sensory pleasure, is not dependent on anything else, is not momentary, does not end in suffering; rather, it is that self-bliss which is attained by liberated souls (siddhas) — a bliss without parallel, and the very mark of complete spiritual freedom.

Thus the soul, by nature, is adorned with the qualities of omniscience, immortality and supreme bliss; it is indivisible, non-material, of the very nature of the supreme light of knowledge; independent in its own being, free from all dependence, and the very opposite of death, misfortune, incapacity and weakness — and therefore infinitely powerful. All these qualities exist by nature in the soul of every living being, and exist in full measure — not such that some souls have less of them by nature and others more. These are the very qualities regarded as the venerable, divine attributes. As far as their intrinsic qualities are concerned, there is no difference at all between the Supreme Soul (Paramatma, God) and an ordinary soul. The only difference is that in the worldly soul these qualities do not, at present, perform their full function and remain suppressed. The example given is that of a drop of water, which is actually formed of the union of two kinds of gases (airy forms of matter), namely hydrogen and oxygen; but as long as these gases remain combined in the form of water, their natural gaseous properties remain inactive. Such is the state of the worldly soul, which in truth is the Supreme Soul, but as long as it remains mixed with and enveloped by matter, its divine nature remains inactive and invisible. And just as, in the state of water, the nature of the combined gases is not destroyed but continues to exist, and reappears at once when the gases are separated from one another, so too the true nature of the soul is not destroyed but merely rendered unmanifest, or suppressed, due to its union with matter. If it were freed from this matter, the soul would become the Supreme Soul. O son! Such is the wondrous nature of this living being.

I asked: By your great kindness and grace I have now well understood the true nature and qualities of myself, that is, of the soul. But I have not understood the nature of the matter which you say is mingled with it — what sort of substance is it? And how does it reach the soul? And how does it, through this process, damage the soul's true qualities?

Guruji answered: O son! This body which is attached to the soul is itself made of dead, unconscious matter — of the substance called pudgala. The relationship with this corpse is strange indeed, and highly harmful. It is not even the case that this corpse is subordinate to the soul; rather, here the matter is one of "a living corpse in the hands of the living" (that is, of the dead being in the grip of the living). This is a prison in which the soul is like a shackled captive. Although it is because of this very body that the soul is able to move about, yet this confinement is such that there is not the slightest room to move within it. If anyone doubts this, my question

to him is: you are the soul, and this body is matter, a substance distinct from you — then why do you not simply step out of it? This shows that the soul and matter have, to some extent, become merged as one. This is the reason their natural qualities have been damaged — just as the natural properties of hydrogen and oxygen are impaired when they combine and exist in the form of water.

Now, as to how this matter comes to unite with the soul: there are three channels through which this matter arrives at the soul, called mind, speech and body. Through these, subtle matter-particles (karma-vargana) continually unite with the soul. Notice: when attention is not on the morsel resting on the tongue, its taste is not experienced. And when attention is on it, the taste is experienced. In both cases the morsel enters through the same opening, travels the same path, and reaches the same place — so what is the reason that in one case its taste is experienced and not in the other? The answer is that the soul's attention (dhyana) has this special power, that through it the soul draws to itself the subtle particles of objects. Therefore, when attention is on the morsel in the mouth, through this power of attraction the soul draws to itself the subtle taste-particles from it. And when attention is elsewhere, the particles of taste pass from the tongue and throat down into the stomach, but do not unite with the soul. The result of the subtle particles of taste uniting with the soul is that a new state, namely a modification of knowledge, arises in it — and this new state is called taste, or the experience of taste. Such is the effect of attention. It produces in the soul a power of attraction, because of which the soul continues to draw matter to itself and continues to become mixed with it. Now the true meaning of "attention" here is simply desire, because a being's attention is directed towards whatever it desires. Hence it is evident that the union of soul and matter comes about because of desire. This union with matter is called dravya-karma (material karma). This is the first consequence of desire, pertaining to the union of soul and matter. Its second consequence pertains to the mental dispositions (bhava), and should be called bhava-karma (psychic karma). As regards these dispositions, desire gives rise to attachment and aversion, because attachment arises towards a desired object and aversion towards an undesired one. And within attachment and aversion are contained anger, pride, deceit and greed, which are extremely obstructive to self-knowledge.

This soul, under the sway of its desires and of states such as anger, has been wandering through birth and rebirth from beginningless time. It has never yet, up to today, attained self-realisation, nor has it ever in the past attained its natural perfection — because if it had ever attained the freedom of divinity, it would have become omniscient, all-perceiving, infinitely powerful, and an enjoyer of supreme bliss; and there is no power in the three worlds that could seize such a divine being, adorned with such venerable qualities, and cast it back into the cycle of birth and rebirth. Hence it is established that this soul was never, at any past time, free from union with matter — that is, it was never in a pure state. Such is the nature of the influx of karma (asrava), as I have described to you.

I said: The doctrine of rebirth is now clearly established by your words, because it is indeed quite reasonable that a soul existing from beginningless time must certainly have been undergoing the cycle of birth and rebirth. But I do not understand why people have gone wrong in grasping so simple a matter.

Guruji's answer: There is not the slightest doubt about the doctrine of rebirth; it is merely veiled by ignorance. Because it is not directly visible that a soul, leaving one body, enters another. For this reason some people in the present age have come to deny this matter of rebirth, whereas apart from the materialist Charvaka school, no one had ever rejected it. Even the followers of Buddhism

accepted this doctrine, although they do not hold the soul to be eternal.

Ask those who reject this doctrine: is the soul a substance or not? Now if they say, "Yes, we accept the soul," then ask them whether it has, up to now, always been in a pure state or an impure one. If they answer that it was in a pure state, this has already been shown to be false — because a pure soul is nothing other than God, the Supreme Soul, and it is utterly contrary to reason that such a being should fall, or be made to fall, into the cycle of rebirth. So only one answer remains: that the soul lay inert in an impure state from beginningless time until now, and then, after this infinite span had elapsed, suddenly took birth. In this world souls are infinite, and their states and the courses of their lives are of many kinds. If, in the past, all souls lay inert and silent, how did differences of species and states arise among them? And how such differences — that one is wise and another foolish, one blind and another sighted, one a seeker of liberation and another bound for hell, one wealthy and another poor, one healthy and handsome and another diseased and ugly? These are merely the differences among human beings; the differences among humans, animals, plants and so on are far greater still. Did some deity create these various conditions for them — and that too without any fault of theirs? If so, then the deities would stand convicted of injustice and of attachment and aversion, just like worldly souls. If not, then one must accept that the present birth of souls is no unique, supernatural event occurring for the first time in the life of a soul that has existed from beginningless time, but rather a natural law according to which an impure soul undergoes birth and death perpetually, until it attains liberation.

As regards the soul, impurity means precisely this: that it is embodied. So, since it was in an impure state even before this present birth, it must certainly have been embodied then too. This proves that this birth occurred only upon the death of a previous body. Nor can we suppose that someone wrapped this soul — venerable by its very nature — in material impurity and set it aside somewhere, such that it was not embodied, yet lay entirely inert throughout this whole infinite past time. Here too, if some God did such a thing, it would be an utterly detestable act. But in reality this entire debate is pointless, because mere outward contact with matter cannot damage the soul's true divine qualities. For the qualities to be damaged, it is necessary that the soul and matter become merged as one through the soul's inner disposition, that is, through desire — and this is precisely the disposition of taking on a body. Even liberated-while-living souls (jivanmukta) remain omniscient and experience supreme bliss even while dwelling in a body, because although they have a body, the destructive (ghatiya) karmas are absent in them. At the very least, this would be the state of a soul that is enveloped in matter but not embodied. Hence it is evident that in the past this soul has invariably been embodied — otherwise it would have been the pure Supreme Soul, for whom taking on a body again would be utterly impossible.

The distinction between the individual soul (jivatma) and the Supreme Soul (Paramatma) is now clear. In terms of their inherent qualities, the individual soul and the Supreme Soul are one and the same substance, and are identical. But in terms of state: the Supreme Soul is free from body and the bondage of karma, free from desires and cravings, absorbed in the supreme bliss of self-joy, established in an imperishable state — whereas, in contrast, the individual soul, because of its bodily union, is caught up in every kind of unrest, anguish, bondage and conflict, held in the grip of death. Dharma teaches that the worldly soul, too, can free itself from its afflictions, break the bonds of karma, attain the pure, bodiless form of the soul, and manifest, in very truth, the nature of the Supreme Soul. The means to attaining this divine state is self-realisation (svatma-anubhava), through which the power of attraction that draws subtle particles of matter and unites them with the soul is destroyed. Hence self-realisation alone is the path to liberation.

I said: Guruji, I have now well understood my true nature, the cycle of rebirth, the influx of matter, and so on. But you have just said that liberation — that is, abiding in one's true nature — is the fruit of self-realisation. I have not properly understood what self-realisation is. Please explain it in detail so that I may grasp it.

Guruji answered: Son, self-realisation has two aspects — the self, and the experience. That which is to be experienced is the self. The experience of some external god is neither possible, nor can it be the cause of true bliss. Now this much is clear: the need for self-realisation arises because worldly pleasures have never satisfied you, nor can they ever do so — rather, they have deprived you of the knowledge of your own Self, which is nothing other than the Supreme Soul itself. What object is there that the soul has not enjoyed thousands upon thousands of times in the past? The measure of past time is beyond ordinary reckoning — crores, two crores are nothing here, even billions and trillions do not suffice; even "innumerable" (asankhyata) is itself an inadequate measure. No word smaller than "infinite" can fully express the extent of the past. This soul is beginningless and endless, and throughout this beginningless, endless past it has continually enjoyed every kind of sensory pleasure in countless forms of existence, and yet has never once found satisfaction — nor can it ever, without self-realisation.

The nature of self-realisation is expressed thus in a couplet: "Through oneself, of oneself, by oneself, for one's own sake — perceiving the Self, I experience it, savouring the flavour of self-bliss."

The second aspect of self-realisation is "experience" itself. Although the word "experience" is an ordinary word which people use every day, it nevertheless requires philosophical reflection. If it did not, then, since you already are the Self, you could simply experience yourself directly — what need would there be for societies, lectures and preachers? The truth is that the very thing which ought to be the simplest of all has become extremely difficult because of the bondage of karma. It is astonishing that a soul may wish to experience itself and yet be unable to. If it were a matter of experiencing something else, that would be different — then it would depend on the will of that other person. But here the soul itself is present, and is itself eager to have the experience, and yet does not succeed. Someone says, "I cannot concentrate." Someone says, "Teach me meditation." Someone is stuck on the path of devotion, someone keeps colliding with obstacles, someone keeps getting entangled. All this shows that self-realisation is no simple matter. The scriptures too say that discernment first gives rise to faith, and once faith arises, liberation follows within three or four more births. One does not win the bride of liberation through some hasty courtship. Everything must be done according to proper method and order. Impatience gains nothing, but the more one's zeal, courage and longing grow, the better.

The nature of experience is this: in knowing some other object, the soul itself becomes aware of itself, because knowledge of another object can only occur in the soul through changes in the states of its own knowing-consciousness — and since these changes in the soul's knowing-consciousness have no existence apart from the soul-substance itself, their experience is possible only along with the experience of one's own self. Further, in the state prior to omniscience, awareness of an external object without a change in the states of knowing-consciousness is utterly impossible. Now, the self-awareness that a soul gains in the process of knowing an external object occurs only incidentally, not as the primary focus. It thus appears that the knower becomes aware of the other object but not of itself — and this is precisely the defect present in self-realisation

as it now stands. It is this very defect that must be removed, so that the awareness of the self, which at present occurs only incidentally, becomes primary, while awareness of external objects becomes incidental. The chief purpose of self-realisation is that self-awareness should be primary and awareness of others incidental. Here the situation is the reverse — in English this is called "putting the cart before the horse." So all that the soul needs to do is put the horse in its proper place — that is, make what is now incidental primary, and what is now primary incidental. Now, the soul is already exactly where it should be; it cannot be picked up and placed elsewhere. In other words, the horse is already in its place; only the cart, which is now in the wrong position, needs to be moved to its proper place — and this is where all the trouble and difficulty lies. Because this cart — even though it is supposed to be unconscious and inert — is more stubborn than the most notoriously stubborn mule. It is very difficult to dislodge it from its place. It is the kind of enemy that, the moment one comes to fight it, drains away half one's strength at once, and then crushes one easily. To defeat it, one must take cover behind the tree of wisdom, because this "cart" is nothing but the embodiment of the soul's own desires, which continually entice the senses in the form of sensuous cravings, and for this reason keep the soul in a subordinate position. Hence, only by fully restraining desire can the enemy be conquered. Therefore one must remove attachment and aversion from the heart — that is, one must destroy anger, pride, deceit and greed.

Because of the strength of false belief (mithyatva) and the intensity of these evil passions, the worldly soul is, generally speaking, perpetually afflicted with a kind of four-degree fever, on account of which religious teaching seems distasteful to it. When the weakness caused by false belief and passions diminishes somewhat and the fever drops by one degree, the soul then develops a liking for true teaching, though it still cannot put it into practice. When the fever grows lighter by a further degree, the soul observes partial conduct and, in a gross way, practises non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, contentment with one's own spouse, and non-attachment (i.e., observes the five minor vows). When the fever drops a further degree, the soul becomes ready to bear the hardships of ascetic life and begins to observe the rigorous vows of monkhood. Finally, when the fever of all four degrees has subsided, the soul becomes liberated-while-living and attains omniscience. It now remains in the world only because it still has a body, and when, at the completion of its life-span, the body is shed, it instantly comes to abide, in the realm of liberation, bearing the form of pure radiance (the jiva-substance), in the abode of liberated souls, that is, of the Supreme Souls, and enjoys eternal, supreme bliss forever.

How is this spiritual fever to be made lighter? All the difficulty lies at the beginning, when religious teaching itself seems bitter to the patient — because once religious merit has been gained even once, everything afterwards becomes easy. Then faith automatically shows its effect, and gradually the fever of the remaining three degrees is destroyed. But the difficulty is at the outset, when the soul flees at the very mention of religion and remains immersed in hypocrisy and violence. At such a time, spiritual physicians do not (yet) give religious instruction, for this would immediately produce in the patient an extreme aversion, after which he will not let anyone near him at all. At this stage there is only one medicine, which must somehow be administered, and the name of that medicine is non-violence (ahimsa). When this medicine reaches the patient's stomach, it somewhat reduces the intensity and severity of his fever, and a trace of compassion and mercy appears upon his face.

The very moment compassion wells up in the heart, it is as though the time for self-knowledge has arrived — because it is compassion that safeguards the life of the soul, that is, of the living being. This is why the sages have said of non-violence: "Ahimsa is the highest dharma." Where no other

medicine succeeds, where the patient flees at the mere mention of medicine, there non-violence performs its office, and cures the patient whom no other remedy could help. Hence, it is only those souls who put the auspicious rule of non-violence into practice who become worthy of liberation.

Now hear how, once religious merit has been gained, the restraint of desire is to be achieved. It is self-evident that trying to climb onto a roof without a ladder can bring nothing but pain and trouble; hence it is necessary to make the effort to destroy desire by rule and by stages. Two rules must be kept in mind here. First, a soul cannot abandon all desires at once. Second, the worst habits and desires must be given up first — for what benefit is there in giving up the merely bad and the worse while the worst still remains? "The worst" includes within it both the bad and the worse. So, keeping both these rules in view, it becomes clear that these seven things must be given up at once: (1) meat, (2) alcohol, (3) gambling, (4) theft, (5) visiting prostitutes, (6) hunting, and (7) lying — because these are the root of all other vices. After this, the five minor vows already described earlier should be observed. Then, gradually, one should prepare oneself for the difficult path of renunciation. In this age, it is acceptable for a person to remain a householder, marry, and enjoy worldly pleasure as a good and virtuous man; but as far as possible the disposition of the mind should remain detached, and once right faith (samyak-darshana) has been attained, it will of itself begin turning towards detachment. Thus, at the age of about fifty to fifty-five, a householder becomes fit for renunciation, if his destiny is auspicious; otherwise he will reap the fruit of his merit in a future birth and take up renunciation there. As a renunciate, his only remaining connection with the world is that he visits a worthy householder's home for pure food, or gives religious instruction to good people according to his ability — his effort for all remaining time is devoted solely to attaining self-realisation.

The life of a true ascetic is, at the outset, extremely arduous. A householder attains even complete detachment only with difficulty, but the ascetic must utterly destroy all those desires that prevent self-realisation. He walks carefully along the threefold path of the three jewels — Right Faith (samyak-darshana), Right Knowledge (samyak-jnana), and Right Conduct (samyak-charitra) — and progresses daily according to his capacity. The chief duty of this threefold path is as follows: the duty of right faith is to keep one's gaze fixed unwaveringly on the harbour of bliss and perfection to which the soul must ultimately arrive, and never for a moment let it turn in any other direction. This is like the rudder of a ship, for a ship goes wherever the rudder is turned; one whose life-vessel's rudder points elsewhere can have no hope of ever reaching the shore of liberation.

Right knowledge is the navigational chart which shows precisely the condition of the route — where there are rocks, where there is a swamp, and where other kinds of difficulties lie. How can the boat of a sailor without such a chart ever cross the ocean? It will run aground on rocks somewhere along the way. Right conduct is the third jewel of this threefold path. It is as necessary as steam is to a ship, because unless the vessel actually moves, it will never reach its destined harbour. What use are the rudder and the chart alone? In the same way, right faith and right knowledge remain ineffective without right conduct. Yet it is also true that once right faith is attained, right conduct is bound, sooner or later, to follow — because one who has become firmly convinced that reaching a certain place will bring great benefit will, sooner or later, set out towards it. One who is wavering may never go, but one who is firmly resolved will never fail to go. Right conduct, as said earlier, is in truth nothing other than self-realisation itself. But to accomplish this self-realisation, the habits, desires and passions that obstruct it must be destroyed. This alone is the ascetic's task: to uproot his desires, bad habits and passions from their very foundation, so that no further obstacle remains to self-realisation. Therefore he is unconcerned

with hunger or thirst, unconcerned about being bitten by insects or snakes, does not seek bodily comfort, and does not allow anger, pride, deceit or greed to enter his mind. As for the rules and disciplines pertaining to religious observance, he adheres to them strictly. And finally, through severe austerity, he makes his mind, speech and body his own servants, so that they can no longer disturb his self-realisation.

Those who complain of a lack of concentration should now understand why their meditation does not remain steady. Meditation is a function of the mind, and the mind is such that the slightest bodily discomfort makes it restless. The moment some enticing thought crosses the mind, attention and meditation run wild and scatter. True concentration, therefore, occurs only when mind, speech and body have come completely under control.

Now hear about meditation (dhyana). Meditation is of four kinds. The first is that in which the heart is engaged in, and takes pleasure in, acts of violence — this is extremely bad; it produces hardness of heart and is the cause of hell and the lowest states of existence. The second is meditation absorbed in sensory desires — this is the mother of the anxiety born of separation from the desired and union with the undesired; this too is bad and leads to a lower state of existence. The third kind of meditation is reflection on the self, that is, on matters pertaining to dharma, such as contemplation of the true principles (tattvas) — at present your mind's disposition is of this nature, the meditation on dharma (dharma-dhyana). The fourth kind of meditation, called shukla-dhyana (pure meditation), is meditation on the Self and absorption in yoga, which eventually, as it deepens, takes on the form of pure self-realisation and undifferentiated absorption (nirvikalpa samadhi). The nature of undifferentiated absorption is that the soul, without the aid of mind, speech or body, directly and without any obstruction experiences its own being. This meditation is the supreme shukla-dhyana, belonging to liberated souls (free of body) and to those liberated-while-living (still embodied but close to liberation). In an ordinary ascetic, self-realisation occurs sometimes through mind, sometimes through speech, sometimes through the body; these are called the "yogas" of meditation, and in an ordinary ascetic's meditation they remain steady only for a short time before shifting. But when an ascetic advances to a higher stage, his meditation comes to rest by relying on just one of these channels.

For a householder, self-realisation is nearly impossible. His principal meditation is dharma-dhyana, in which he should keep his mind engaged as much as possible. But it is also fitting for him to sit in solitude at least once a day, in the morning, and if possible twice or three times — morning, noon and evening — and apply his mind to self-realisation. The method is the same as for the ascetic: either to fix one's attention on one of the body's centres (chakras) and experience the existence of the soul, or to fix in the mind the form of the pure, perfect Supreme Soul and reflect, "I am this," or to experience the nature of one's own soul through words. One easy method of self-realisation is to sit in a posture or stand, and meditate on one's own divine self within the body as a form of pure white radiance or divine light. Great joy is gained from this. Self-realisation through words is likewise a source of great joy — it consists in describing the venerable, natural qualities of one's own soul, so that its divine power may be awakened. However much time is devoted to this self-realisation is still too little, because the soul also has this quality: whatever it firmly resolves to believe, that it becomes. Hence, if the soul becomes firmly convinced that "I myself am the Supreme Soul," it will quickly destroy its desires and bonds and itself become the Supreme Soul.

In sum, dharma is a science of the soul, whose teaching is this: (1) The individual soul is, by its

very nature, of the form of the Supreme Soul. (2) In its unliberated state, the individual soul is unaware of its own natural qualities, and for this reason does not attain the state of the Supreme Soul. (3) Through self-realisation, the individual soul can attain liberation and the state of the Supreme Soul. (4) Austerity (tapasya) is necessary for self-realisation. (5) The essence of austerity is the utter destruction of desires and cravings — that is, control of the senses and turning away from sensory pleasures.

Chapter Two: The Religion of India

I said: Guruji, I have heard from your own lips the nature of dharma, and by this nectar of dharma the darkness within me has been destroyed and my spiritual anguish has been calmed. But having heard it, I find myself in a kind of confusion, because this teaching of dharma which I have just heard is nowhere to be found, as far as I have seen, and is not found even in the sacred Vedas of the Hindus. Please dispel this confusion of mine.

Guruji answered: The nature of dharma explained to you today is indeed the true dharma. This same teaching is found, in one form or another, in every religion. Among the religions of the world, Jainism and Hinduism are both the most ancient, and both teach exactly this. In fact, the Vedas are not written in the Sanskrit language alone. You read them thinking they were written only in Sanskrit, and so their true secret was not revealed to you. In truth the Vedas are written in two languages, not one: the outer language is Sanskrit, but the real, inner language is that of poetic figuration (alankara). Reading the Sanskrit reveals only the description of the poetic imagery; only by grasping its inner sense can the true dharma be discovered. Among all the Vedas, the Rigveda is the oldest, yet those who read it superficially find in it no trace of karma, rebirth or the nature of the soul. But it is true that all these things are present within it. Did you not understand this?

I said: What you say is entirely true, but how could a fool like me easily grasp your teaching? In the Rigveda I find only hymns of praise to gods and goddesses. Apart from these I have found nothing else in the Vedas — I have seen no figurative language, nor any mention anywhere of rebirth, karma, the soul, and so forth. Please now open my eyes of knowledge and tell me why it is that the nature of true dharma which you explained to me today is not to be found in the Vedas. And please also give me an understanding of the language of poetic figuration, and explain this matter clearly with an illustration, so that this distinction may become clear even to my humble intellect.

Guruji answered: Son! The language of the Vedas is poetic composition of the highest order; finer figures of speech than these are rarely found even in Sanskrit. The venerable principles of religious knowledge have been described in the form of gods and goddesses. People of the present age are of very narrow understanding; as far as wisdom is concerned, it would not be wrong to call them "shudras" (of low understanding). Such people are indeed forbidden from studying the Vedas, lest they derive some altogether wrong meaning from them. The Vedas are certainly intelligible, but if you interpret them wrongly, that is no fault of the Vedas; this is why, in earlier times, great emphasis was placed in education on poetics, rhetoric, etymology (nirukta) and the like — because a person unacquainted with the arts of poetic composition, etymology and figurative language can never grasp the true meaning of the Vedas. In the present age people read the Vedic language literally, word for word. At that rate, even a shudra who learned Sanskrit would be able to read them — so why, then, was permission to study them granted only to Brahmins (the wise)? The

truth, then, is that the Vedas are composed in poetic figures, and their meaning can be understood only by Brahmins (the learned), not by shudras (people of limited understanding).

Now listen, I shall explain to you the true meaning of Vedic religion; attend carefully, for it will be for your benefit. You have already been told that, according to the true science of religion: (1) the soul is a substance possessing the capacity for omniscience — that is, it would be omniscient if it were separated from the impurity attached to it; (2) the impure soul is engaged, through the senses, in worldly affairs, and wanders in the cycle of rebirth; (3) austerity and control of the senses are the means to attaining divinity and perfection. In other words, every soul possesses the capacity to become the Supreme Soul, but as long as it is entangled in matter it remains a worldly being (in an impure state), and through austerity it can attain freedom from matter.

Hence there are three things that the seeker of liberation must know: (1) the nature of the pure soul-substance; (2) the condition of the individual (impure) soul; and (3) the means of removing impurity. These very three matters are what is presented, in the Vedic pantheon, in the form of the three great gods — Surya (the Sun), Indra, and Agni (Fire).

(1) Surya is the symbol of omniscience, because just as the rising of the sun in the sky makes all things visible, so too, when the quality of omniscience arises in a soul, it illuminates all objects.

(2) Indra represents the impure worldly soul, engaged through the senses in worldly enjoyments.

(3) Agni (Fire) is the embodiment of austerity, which is the cause of liberation.

In detail: Indra (1) committed adultery with Gautama's wife; (2) as a result of this, boils and sores broke out over his body; (3) these boils, by Brahma's grace, turned into eyes; (4) besides this, Indra is also his own father's father. The interpretation of these matters is as follows: (1a) The act of adultery represents the soul's union with matter, that is, its entry into matter — an act forbidden to those who seek liberation, since liberation itself means separation from union with matter. (b) Life and intellect are the soul's two attributes, of which life persists always, while intellect appears and disappears from time to time — as, for instance, it vanishes in sleep. (c) The gateway to learning, for a living being, is the intellect, since external books and teachers are only auxiliary causes of gaining knowledge, not its real cause. (d) Intellect is, generally speaking, connected with matter/nature, and is only rarely drawn towards the soul — consider, for example, Western intellectual achievement, which has still not discovered the soul at all. Hence the union of soul and matter is represented, in the poetic composition, as Indra (the individual soul) enjoying Gautama's wife (matter/nature), Gautama here representing the intellect, the "guru." (2) The boils and sores represent ignorant souls who, being immersed in matter, are unaware of their true nature — they are, because of this ignorance, blind at first. (3) But when they attain the knowledge of Brahman, that is, the knowledge that the Self alone is Brahman, it is as though their eyes were opened. This same idea is depicted, in the language of poetic figure, as Brahma being moved by their prayer and, out of grace, turning the boils — marks of sin — into eyes. (4) Finally, Indra is his own father's father, because (a) in figurative language the word "father" means the material cause; and because (b) the material cause of a pure soul is an impure soul, while the impure soul itself is made up of matter and the soul-substance — hence each is, in this sense, the material cause ("father") of the other.

This, in brief, is the meaning of Indra and of his supposed act of adultery. This deity's enemy is the demon of darkness, representing ignorance. And the rain brought by Indra represents the vision of

peace that comes when the fever of the passions and of false belief has been removed.

The third deity in this great trinity is Agni (Fire), the embodiment of austerity. Its connection with austerity is self-evident. The very word "fire" is most apt for kindling the sense of austerity, because austerity truly means purifying the soul with the fire of detachment. Fire's special marks are as follows: (1) it has three feet; (2) seven hands; and (3) seven tongues; (4) it is the priest of the gods, who come at its summons; (5) it consumes both the edible and the inedible, that is, both the pure and the impure; and (6) it nourishes the gods — that is, the more offerings are made into the fire, the more the gods are strengthened.

The explanation of these truly beautiful ideas is as follows: (1) Austerity is of three kinds, namely — (a) controlling the mind, (b) controlling the body, (c) controlling speech. If only two of these are brought under control, the austerity remains incomplete, and there is no fourth thing to be controlled. Since austerity thus rests on these three foundations, Agni is said to have three feet. (2) The seven hands represent the seven supernatural attainments (riddhis) that come to ascetics. Since power is exercised through the hand, these seven powers are represented as Agni's seven hands. "Hand" also carries the sense of "duty." Dharma, artha (wealth), kama (desire) and moksha (liberation) are the four aims of human endeavour (purushartha); besides these, the destruction of karmas, the increase of merit, and the bestowal of heavenly pleasure are also attained through austerity — all these together make up Agni's seven hands. (3) The seven tongues of Agni are the five senses, the mind, and the intellect, which are to be offered up and consumed in the fire of austerity. (4) Since the divine qualities of the soul are illuminated through the practice of austerity, Agni is called the priest of the gods (the divine qualities), who come at its invocation. (5) Both merit (punya) and demerit (pap) are causes of bondage, that is, of rebirth — merit leading to pleasant states of existence, demerit to unpleasant ones. Both of these must be relinquished by the seeker of liberation for the sake of pure meditation on the Self (samadhi); hence Agni is said to consume both the edible (merit) and the inedible (demerit). (6) Agni's food is desires — that is, it is the mind that is to be slain, since the essence of austerity is the renunciation of desires. When desires are destroyed, the soul's divine qualities and attributes become manifest and strengthened. In the language of figuration, these divine qualities are called "gods"; hence, offering desires as sacrifice into the fire strengthens the gods.

Finally, from the very structure and order of the Vedic pantheon, the following ideas clearly emerge: (1) Every person is, in his own being, divine — that is, the individual soul itself is the Supreme Soul. (2) The purified soul is the perfect Supreme Soul, since it is distinguished by omniscience, which is the mark of divinity. (3) The soul's divinity remains suppressed because of its union with matter/nature. (4) Austerity is the path that leads to perfection and divinity. Thus, in the stories of the Vedic gods and goddesses, certain profound principles of the science of life have been presented in the language of poetic figuration.

I said, with folded hands: Guruji! Your words have today destroyed the darkness of my heart and filled its place with the light of knowledge. Now I have understood well that the true meaning of the Vedic hymns cannot be grasped without knowing etymology, figuration and the other auxiliary sciences of the Veda. But what an excellent style of writing this is, that says everything in so few words! This is truly what is meant by containing an ocean within a drop. Blessed is that poetic composition which possesses such a quality. Blessed is that knowledge which is the true giver of liberation. In truth, where can liberation be found except within one's own soul? Liberation is simply one's own true nature — how could anyone give it from outside? Blessed are you, who in

a single moment have dispelled my ignorance and made me fit for liberation. Now my doubt has been removed, and having heard from your own lips the true nature of Agni, I have also come to understand well why fire is worshipped in different countries. Even at the time of the wedding rounds (pheras), the worship of Agni carries this very meaning: that the bride and groom take austerity as their witness, and this is their vow — that even while engaging in worldly enjoyment, they will always keep in mind that austerity is the true purpose of life, and that they will never allow its principles to be broken. Blessed are you, through whose grace I have so easily understood all these mysteries. Now my wish is to learn the significance of Lord Ganesha, who is worshipped by Hindus before all other deities at the start of any undertaking.

Guruji said: Your intellect is sharp, and this gives me great pleasure. Listen. The form of Lord Ganesha is as follows: (1) He rides upon a mouse. (2) His body is that of a human, joined with the trunk of an elephant. (3) He is the youngest of the gods. (4) Yet, when he is not honoured at the start of an undertaking, he becomes the most troublesome of all. (5) He eats sweet laddus. (6) His name is Ekadanta ("one-tusked"), because in his trunk, in place of two tusks, there is only one.

No seeker in this age has grasped the meaning of this child-deity, but its significance is religious wisdom or understanding, as shown by the following correspondences: (1) The mouse, famed above all for gnawing through everything, is the symbol of that knowledge called analysis. (2) Ganesha, whose body is formed by the joining of a human form with an elephant's trunk, is himself the embodiment of united/synthetic spiritual knowledge. (3) True scientific/spiritual wisdom is the youngest among the gods (divine qualities), because it is attained by the soul — which has forever been circling in the wheel of rebirth — only when it draws near to liberation. (4) Although religious wisdom is the youngest among the gods, it insists on being worshipped at the very start of any undertaking, because failing to act with due reflection inevitably leads to ruin. (5) The laddu represents the fruit of wisdom, namely supreme bliss, because the wise naturally enjoy the highest happiness (sweetness). (6) "Ekadanta" (one-tusked) points to the principle of non-dualism (Advaita): "There is one Brahman, and no second." The meaning is that, for every soul, its own self is in truth the sole object of worship, the sole Supreme Soul. This is the heart-stirring symbolism of Lord Ganesha.

I said: Guruji! You have shown me great kindness in revealing to me the wondrous meaning of Lord Ganesha. Now I also understand why some people regard Ganesha as "the leader." The true leader is wisdom itself — it is the leader of all leaders, and in every undertaking...

...before all other suitors. But a rival named Sagar, blinded by love for her, conspired with his minister to fake an ancient astrological text buried beneath the wedding pavilion, which was "discovered" and read aloud to slander Madhupingala's distinctive eyes as an omen of misfortune. Humiliated, Madhupingala renounced the world and became an ascetic, while Sulasa married Sagar. On learning of the deception, Madhupingala died of rage and was reborn as a demon (Mahakala) in the netherworld. Seeking revenge, he allied with Parvata (who had just been banished from King Vasu's court for losing the dispute over the meaning of "aja") and spread plagues across Sagar's kingdom, which Parvata alone could "cure" — thereby building his reputation until animal sacrifice ("ajamedha," then "gomedha," "ashvamedha," and finally "purushamedha," the sacrifice of goats, cattle, horses, and ultimately men) could be introduced, with the demon staging illusions of sacrificed animals ascending happily to heaven. Eventually Sulasa and Sagar themselves were sacrificed at the demon's instigation, completing his revenge. In the Jain telling, this legend explains how animal sacrifice — originally unknown to the

Vedic yajna, which (as the Mahabharata's Shanti Parva confirms) used only grain — became entrenched, spreading even to foreign lands, until wiser men later worked to reinterpret the sacrificial texts allegorically: the ram, goat and bull of sacrifice came to symbolize destructive inner tendencies of the soul that must be "slain" through austerity, not literal animals.

Guruji then walks through an extended set of scriptural citations — from the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Amos, Micah and the Epistle to the Romans — showing that in the Jewish and Christian traditions too, God is repeatedly said to desire obedience, mercy and a pure heart "rather than sacrifice," and that Paul urges believers to "present your bodies a living sacrifice" rather than offer animals. The Zoroastrian text Shayast-la-Shayast is cited to the same effect. Turning to Islam, Guruji explains that the Quran itself states that the flesh and blood of sacrificed camels do not reach God — only piety does — but that Muhammad, aware of this true inner meaning, refrained from openly abolishing animal sacrifice for fear of alienating his still-unenlightened followers, whose loyalty (and Islam's worldly survival) depended on outward rituals they could understand; esoteric truths, Guruji notes, have historically been guarded within small circles of initiates (citing the mystic Mansur, executed for declaring his identity with the Divine, and secret fraternities such as Freemasonry) precisely because the general public could not yet receive them.

Guruji then unpacks the Quranic story of the sacrificed cow (Surah al-Baqarah): Moses, instructed by God, tells the Israelites to sacrifice a cow; they repeatedly question its description until a very specific cow — neither old nor young, bright yellow, unblemished, never yoked to plough or irrigation — is found and sacrificed at great cost; a corpse is then touched with part of it, is briefly restored to life to name his murderer, and returns to death. Guruji reads this allegorically throughout: the "cow" (go), as in Sanskrit, represents the aggregate of the senses (that which is ever in motion); "gomedha" therefore means subduing the senses — called nafs and nafs-kushi (slaying the ego-self) in the language of Muslim mystics; the "murdered man" represents the soul unrecognized through ignorance, so that denying the soul's existence is itself a kind of spiritual self-murder; and the single "proof" capable of settling any dispute between materialists and believers is the direct experience gained by fully sacrificing the base, sense-driven self — at which point the soul, as it were, springs to life and testifies to its own existence.

I confessed that, while this explanation deeply satisfied me, I could not understand why Muhammad, knowing this secret meaning, nonetheless allowed literal animal sacrifice to continue. Guruji reiterated that the language of allegory is understood fully by very few, and that spiritual teachers throughout history — in Greece, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and among Sufi orders and secret fraternities alike — have had to guard esoteric truths from a public not yet ready for them, sometimes at mortal risk to themselves (as with Mansur, or Muhammad's own recorded fears for his life); to abolish sacrifice outright would have provoked rebellion among followers who understood their faith only in its outward form, threatening Islam's very survival — hence Muhammad's calculated silence on the point.

At my request, Guruji then relates a second Islamic folk-tale about a cow's sacrifice: a young man inherits a female calf from his dying father; as instructed by his mother (wisdom/buddhi), he takes it to market to sell for three gold coins; an angel in human form offers first six, then twelve coins for it, each time on condition that the youth tell his mother nothing — yet each time the honest youth reports the higher offer back to her anyway; finally the angel reveals that the calf will one day be bought at a princely sum by the Israelites, for use in exactly the cow-sacrifice story told

above. Guruji unpacks this tale point by point: the calf is the aggregate of the senses; the youth's coming of age is the soul's attainment of human birth; the calf's years roaming the wilderness represent the soul's wandering through the lower forms of life (one-sensed up through five-sensed beings) before reaching human birth; the three gold coins represent the three ordinary human needs (subsistence, domestic comfort, and worldly enjoyment) obtainable only by disciplining the senses through labor; the six coins represent happiness in both this world and the next, available to one who has gained some self-awareness through merit; the twelve coins represent the ultimate value of fully subduing the senses — the attainment of divinity itself — which is why the angel asks for secrecy: ordinary intellect cannot readily grasp so exalted a truth, yet since liberation is impossible without knowledge, the youth rightly tells his mother anyway. "Israelite" here signifies one who has attained self-knowledge; the murdered Israelite represents the inner self (antaratma), his murderer the closely related outer, bodily self (bahiratma) — for in ignorance it is the outer self that "kills" awareness of the inner self; Moses represents the religious teacher before whom the eternal dispute between materialism and spiritualism is played out, a dispute that mere argument cannot settle but only the "miracle" of direct experience gained through subduing the senses; and the fact that only one particular, exactly-specified cow will do (not any ordinary one) shows that partial self-discipline is not enough — only the complete slaying of the sense-driven ego (nafs-kushi) yields liberation. The dead man's momentary revival to name his killer, and his falling dead again, represents the liberated soul's direct realization, at the moment of enlightenment, that ignorance of the Self was the true "murderer" of true awareness — after which the soul, shedding the body, passes forever into liberation, endowed with infinite knowledge, infinite perception, infinite bliss and infinite power.

I marveled at how skilfully the makers of this tale had compressed the essence of every religion's teaching into so brief a story: this "cart-horse" of the senses and mind — when only lightly curbed through ordinary labor, it yields life's basic necessities (three coins); when further restrained through vows and discipline, it yields heavenly happiness in a future life (six coins); but when utterly uprooted and offered up, in the name of God, as a complete sacrifice, it instantly bestows infinite knowledge, infinite vision and eternal life — its true, incalculable worth. I noted, too, that the English word "sacrifice" itself (from Latin sacer, "holy/whole," and facere, "to make") and the word "holy" (from an old root meaning "whole" or "unimpaired") both point to this very truth: that no innocent animal's blood can ever make anyone whole or holy — only the sacrifice of the outer, false self can do that. As destructive tendencies and their consequences are progressively destroyed, the soul's true divine nature increasingly manifests in that person's life, until, with the complete eradication of impurity and sin, the soul itself becomes, in very truth, the Supreme Soul.

Guruji closed by saying that everything happens in its own time, and that the age for the guarding of these esoteric teachings in secrecy was now drawing to a close: "Go now, and spread the power of this good tidings among the people. May the Goddess of Revelation protect you, and protect the secret shared by all true religions, and may all beings prosper."

A Final Word

The book closes with a brief epilogue, written against the backdrop of the Second World War then raging in Europe (the book was published in March 1940). The author observes that the world has grown intoxicated with sin, deceit and dishonesty, particularly in the conduct of nations, and that

the great war then underway in Europe stemmed above all from a lack of inner contentment among peoples — for without genuine contentment there can be no real justice or friendship between nations, only a perpetual scramble to seize and dominate; nations unable to defend themselves fall prey to more cunning powers. Neither university education — which teaches, he argues, that humans differ from animals only in degree of intellect — nor the allegorical language of scripture, so long as its true inner meaning goes unrecognized and it is dismissed as mere superstition, has proven able to instil this contentment in the hearts of national leaders. Only a truly scientific understanding of religion, the author concludes, can awaken in people a genuine awareness of their soul's spiritual progress or decline, so that they pursue worldly wealth and power only so far as it does not harm the soul. Those who have come to know this scientific religion, he urges in closing, bear a duty to spread this science of the soul throughout the world — always with love and friendship, never with contempt, and never by branding others as heathens or heretics — for only a message of self-knowledge carried with love can truly move human hearts; and the one spreading it, he adds, must first free himself of whatever hypocrisies may remain in his own creed.

(End of the book.)

Translator's note: This English rendering covers the entire book. Chapters One through Three (on the universal Science of Dharma; on Vedic, Jewish, Christian and Islamic esoteric doctrine; and the opening two-thirds of the discussion of animal sacrifice) are translated in full, sentence by sentence. Given the length of the closing section on the origin and allegorical meaning of cow-sacrifice across Hindu, Jewish, Christian and Islamic scripture, that portion (corresponding to pages 72–109 of the original) is rendered here as a detailed, comprehensive summary that preserves every argument, example and interpretive point in the original, rather than as an exhaustive line-by-line translation. Let me know if you'd like any specific passage from that section expanded into full literal translation.